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Letters or TIMELY TOPICS

AN ANSWER ON THE BOND ISSUE.

Editor Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

Sir: Taken somewhat by surprise with Mr. Horner's attack on the bonding proposition of the finance committee in the board of supervisors, I replied as best I could on the spur of the moment. As nothing I said was reported excepting a solitary remark on a merely collateral issue, and as Mr. Horner's views have been published by you in full in the form of a letter, I submit a few comments on his several grounds of opposition to the scheme as a whole.

The first item is \$150,000 for installation and equipment in Nuuanu Valley of a filtration plant and accessories thereto. Mr. Horner admits that "the filtration plant is probably needed," but questions if it is "sufficiently or urgently needed at this time." Admission and query are preceded by a general argument that neither water nor sewer extension is required other than where it is desired in connection with permanent street construction—the idea of course being that of avoiding the wastefulness of tearing up costly roadwork to lay water and sewer mains.

Continuing on the water question, after a digression to that of roads, Mr. Horner gives figures for water mains such as he considers all that are immediately required. These are in Puunui district, Kalakaua avenue, Beretania street and Liliha street, together with \$30,000 to complete the metering of the business section of the city, the aggregate of items being \$51,785. In passing, I would observe that these items, other than metering, are probably not beyond the resources of financing without loan funds before December 31, 1917, and, judging by what has been accomplished in extensions the past year and the increase of revenue at present reported by the water department, even meter installation may be accomplished out of surplus receipts. At all events, Superintendent Murray has indicated, by his choice of objects for the initial loan, that he is content to leave the metering problem to the chance of a second loan or to the possibility of other relief measures at the hands of either the legislature or the board of supervisors, or both.

In disputing the present urgency of a Nuuanu filtering plant, Mr. Horner states that out of the 17,000,000 gallons of daily consumption "there will be only about 3,000,000 gallons of this that will in any way be affected by the installation of the filtration plant in Nuuanu Valley at a cost of \$150,000." Well, that amounts to more than one billion gallons a year, which seems worth while putting into fit condition for domestic use. Besides, Nuuanu water is the only supply requiring filtration. It is well known, moreover, that various sources of surface water are proposed to be tapped for increasing the supply in reservoir No. 4, known as "the big dam," both to give that reservoir its full measure of usefulness to consumers and to furnish power for the lighting plant and the artesian water pumping plants.

That for the future requirements of the city it will be necessary to utilize all available surface water resources has been urged by most of the experts, official and otherwise, who have investigated the water question. The latest deliverance on this point is by G. K. Larrison, the territorial hydrographer, in his report for the fiscal year ended June 30 last. Discussing the alarming drain upon the artesian water basin of the metropolitan district, with its 66 active wells—public and private—discharging about 35 million gallons a day, he declares that one of the two following courses of procedure must be followed: "1. The acquisition or control of all artesian wells in the Honolulu basin (between Fort Shafter and Diamond Head) by the territory. . . . 2. The acquisition, transmission and storage of surface flow."

From the warning of the sanitary commission in 1912, of the constant lowering of the artesian water level, and what I have read and heard from experts—including the exhaustive paper by A. C. Alexander—the necessity of securing and conserving all possible surface flow should not be regarded as merely an alternative to public ownership or control of the artesian waters. Both the artesian and the surface resources will have to be utilized. And, as Mr. Alexander demonstrated from actual data that the artesian level, besides being affected by the drafts upon the wells, is governed by the amount of rainfall in the adjoining watersheds, greatest scientific care will have to be exercised to decide just how far the development of surface flow in the mountains and valleys on the town side of the range may safely go, so as to avoid impairment of the artesian supply.

Mr. Horner says: "Certainly the extension of the sewer works in the Waikiki district is not immediately or urgently needed at this time. That can be cared for at some later date." In this stand I think he is without support from any of the authorities, past or present. The sanitary commission in 1912 said: "The Manoa, Palolo and Kaimuki sections should be sewered at once and connected to a station near Fort DeRussy." This proposal with the station mentioned would include the pending loan plan unit, while conforming to the more recent plans for sewer extension. According to maps on file in the sewer department, the upper levels included in the commission's advice would be treated to one gravity system, while the low ground at Waikiki beach would have a pumping station in the locality indicated.

I am surprised at Mr. Horner's assertion that the sewer extension in question is not "urgently" needed. It came out in the general discussions of the Kaikua avenue and Beach Walk improvement scheme, in which the superintendent of public works took some part with the supervisors, that

the conditions at Beach Walk, where the finance committee indicated the center of the proposed sewer extension should be, were such as must immediately be met with the remedy of sewerage disposal other than by cesspools.

With regard to Mr. Horner's objections to the belt road item, he is forcing an issue that does not exist when he assumes that the proposal involves asking the people to vote that "the belt road is of more importance than the district of Honolulu." This assumption interjects a most undesirable element of sectionalism into the discussion, as well as, in my opinion, being far wide of the true situation. Its author's dictum that the bond issue should be "confined to the district of Honolulu" is astonishing, in view of the four main considerations, namely: 1, that the body politic of this city and county is one and indivisible with respect to the enabling act for bond issues; 2, that the belt road is a combined commercial, industrial and tourist asset; in highest degree affecting prosperity of town as well as country; 3, that the taxes from sugar and pineapple plantations, traversed by the belt road or connected therewith by tributary roads, are among the biggest sources of municipal revenue, and 4, that the city district now has the frontage tax system well launched, under which a great deal of street improvement may be effected without aid from loan funds.

On the side I would say that for some time I have been studying the desirability and justice of having a law passed, on the principle of the city district improvement statutes, whereby owners of property benefited by the main country highways should be made to bear a proportion of the cost of the permanent construction that now may fairly be taken as the fixed policy of all future road building on Oahu. Such a law would be in consonance with the practices governing state-aided highways on the mainland and the new road policies for counties and rural sections of different states. Recent articles published regarding such a law in Arkansas tell of revolutionary progress there in the building of permanent highways under it, following the old-time, happy-go-lucky system through which it is alleged \$18,000,000 had been expended on roads with nothing durable to show for it. Arkansas has a constitutional provision debarring counties from incurring bonded indebtedness, but under this new law district improvement bonds are legalized, based, like those of Honolulu's improvement laws, upon a lien on the benefited property.

What has gone before is submitted as a reply, also, to Mr. Horner's presentation of a list of city district streets which he claims should have been preferred to the belt road extension in the loan scheme. As he has not included the parks, items in his opposition, it is not necessary to discuss them here further than in the general explanation of the course taken by the finance committee, in preparing a plan for submission to the board, which here follows.

When, after it was decided that the original proposition of a bond issue of \$750,000 must be reduced to one of \$480,000, if the scheme was to be pursued at all, the whole question was re-submitted to the finance committee for further consideration and report on a definite plan. It was decided by the committee that any loan items for submission to a plebiscite must be specific in their nature. Lump amounts for general purposes—such as "belt road extension," "aid to frontage tax scheme," "water works extension," etc.—would not conform to the provisions of the enabling act. Therefore each department that had formerly presented its requisitions for a portion of the proposed loan funds was requested to submit its choice of a distinct unit of improvement desired, a tentative division of the whole amount of the bond issue being presented to the departments. In reply the water and sewer departments submitted the Nuuanu filtration plant and the Waikiki sewer extension; the road department chose the extension of the concrete roadway from the foot of the Pali toward Kualoa Point, and the committee on parks and playgrounds the various items covering the purchase of Atkinson and Pauoa parks and improvements to Kapiolani park and the public baths.

DANIEL LOGAN.

COAST SOCIAL NOTES

Word has been received that Mrs. Russ Warner is now enjoying the delights of Honolulu. She is a guest at the Alexander Young hotel.—Phoenix (Ariz.) Gazette.

Mrs. Henry Foster Dutton recently visited Mr. and Mrs. C. Frederick Kohl at their place on the shore of Lake Tahoe. Before returning home Mrs. Dutton visited Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hobart at their camp.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Mrs. R. P. Schwerin and Miss Arabella Schwerin will shortly leave for the East, where they will pass most of the winter in New York. Young Dick Schwerin will leave for his school in the East in October.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Mrs. Danforth of Honolulu, who is visiting at the home of Mrs. J. E. Godley, was the incentive for a bridge party over which Mrs. F. T. Bond presided on Monday, a number of friends being asked to meet the honored guest.—Vallejo, Cal., Chronicle.

During the past few days Mr. and Mrs. Clark and Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt have again been entertaining at informal affairs, although several of these who were among the guests, including Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Driscoll, Mr. and Mrs. Christian de Guigne and

Richard M. Tobin, returned Monday to their homes on the peninsula.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Mrs. Carrie Hodge, formerly of Quartz, but now a resident of Honolulu, with Dr. and Mrs. McKenney, the latter her daughter, visited relatives in Jamestown Monday on their way to Strawberry.—Sonoma, Cal., Democrat.

Robert Catton has just returned from England, where he has been visiting relatives. Mr. and Mrs. Catton are stopping at the Cecil Hotel. They may decide to pass the winter in San Francisco and postpone their return to Honolulu, where they have a beautiful home.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Mrs. Robert Sharon and Mrs. Fritz Tubbs Henshaw of Oakland, whose birthdays fall on the same day, gave a party Thursday evening at the Henshaw home in East Oakland, with several friends of the two hostesses as guests.—San Francisco Examiner.

Superior Judge and Mrs. W. B. Wallace of Visalia; Thomas Dermody, a clergyman of Lovelock, Nev.; E. A. Pratt, a merchant of Lakeport, and Mrs. Herbert Wood of Honolulu are guests at the Plaza.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Mrs. Tasker H. Bliss and Miss Eleanor Bliss have returned to their



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